



LINCOLN CHAFEE

U.S. SENATOR

RHODE ISLAND

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TWO CHAFEE-SPONSORED BILLS APPROVED BY COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Two bills sponsored by **U.S. Senator Lincoln Chafee (R-RI)** were unanimously approved today by the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works. The bills will now move to the full Senate for consideration.

The Water Infrastructure Financing Act, S. 1400, will reauthorize the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Funds (SRF), to provide critical new resources for the nation's water infrastructure needs. This bipartisan measure targets aging infrastructure in our cities and towns, with funding to be reauthorized for the clean water and drinking water SRFs at \$35 billion over the next five years.

The SRF Program's Primary purpose is to make funds available to water systems to finance drinking water and waste water infrastructure improvements. Under the respective programs, EPA awards capitalization grants to states, which in turn provide low-cost loans and other types of assistance to public water systems to finance the costs of infrastructure projects needed to achieve or maintain compliance with national standards. States are also authorized to set aside a portion of their grants to fund a range of activities, including source water protection, capacity development, and operator certification.

"In addition to providing vital new funding for the Clean Water and Drinking Water SRFs, S. 1400 begins to address some of our nation's most difficult water quality concerns by placing greater emphasis on watershed planning, assistance for small and disadvantaged communities, and innovation and technological advancement in the drinking water and clean water fields. I am pleased to support this bipartisan legislation and look forward to working with my colleagues on and off the Committee to ensure its swift passage through the Senate and Congress," Senator Chafee said.

Additionally, the committee also approved S.1410, the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act of 2005. The Chafee-sponsored legislation would reauthorize funding for the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Program at its current level of \$5 million through fiscal year 2007, and then increase funding to \$8 million in fiscal year 2008 and \$10 million annually for fiscal years 2009 and 2010. Since its inception in 2000, the program has provided grants to over 100 projects in the Caribbean, Latin America, and the United States to encourage habitat protection, education, research, monitoring, and capacity building for long-term protection of neotropical migratory birds. In addition to the funding increases, the bill would expand the project eligibility to Canada and would also create a new Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Fund. Provisions are also included to allow for greater participation in the program, by reducing the non-federal match requirement for projects from three non-federal dollars for every federal dollar down to one-to-one.

“S. 1410 will assist in addressing persistent threats to neotropical migratory birds during their breeding and migration in North America as well as their migration and over-wintering in Latin America and the Caribbean,” Senator Chafee said.

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